

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) A plug-in module frame comprising:

at least one socket having at least one signal contact for communicating information signals between the plug-in module frame and a plug-in module mounted to the socket, the socket comprising type detecting circuitry to detect a characteristic of the plug-in module mounted in the socket, the characteristic being associated with a protocol supported by the plug-in module; ~~and~~

a protocol converter operatively connected to the type detecting circuitry and having first and second terminals, the protocol converter operable to support a plurality of protocols and configured to:

receive a first information signal encoded according to a first protocol at the first terminal;

convert the first information signal from the first protocol to a second protocol based on the detected characteristic; and

transmit the converted first information signal encoded over the second terminal;

the protocol converter comprising a plurality of converter units, each converter unit being configured to support a subset of the plurality of protocols; and

switching circuitry to selectively connect a signal contact of a first socket to a corresponding one of the protocol converter units based on the protocol associated with the characteristic detected by the type detecting circuitry of the first socket.

9. (Previously Presented) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 wherein the protocol converter is further configured to:

receive a second information signal encoded according to the second protocol at the second terminal;

convert the second information signal from the second protocol to the first protocol based on the detected characteristic; and

transmit the converted second information signal over the first terminal.

10. (Previously Presented) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 further comprising a plurality of sockets, each socket including a signal contact and type detecting circuitry.

11-12. (Cancelled).

13. (Previously Presented) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 wherein the type detecting circuitry comprises a circuit to address and read a storage component.

14. (Currently Amended) The plug-in module frame of claim 8 wherein the socket is configured to receive a Small Form factor Pluggable (SFP) module.

15. (Currently Amended) A plug-in module configured to be inserted into a plug-in module frame, the plug-in module comprising:

a type encoding device to interface with a type detecting unit associated with the a plug-in module frame; and comprising:

at least one socket to receive the plug-in module, and having at least one signal contact for communicating information signals between the plug-in module frame and the plug-in module mounted to the socket, the socket comprising the type detecting unit to detect a characteristic of the plug-in module mounted in the socket, the characteristic being associated with a protocol supported by the plug-in module;

a protocol converter operatively connected to the type detecting unit and having first and second terminals, the protocol converter operable to support a plurality of protocols and configured to:

receive a first information signal encoded according to a first protocol at the first terminal;

convert the first information signal from the first protocol to a second protocol based on the detected characteristic; and

transmit the converted first information signal encoded over the second terminal;

the protocol converter comprising a plurality of converter units, each converter unit

being configured to support a subset of the plurality of protocols; and

switching circuitry to selectively connect a signal contact of a first socket to a

corresponding one of the protocol converter units based on the protocol

associated with the characteristic detected by the type detecting unit of the first socket; and

the type encoding device being configured to encode an information signal according to a
the protocol that is supported by the plug-in module.

16. (Previously Presented) The plug-in module of claim 15 wherein the type encoding device
comprises an electronic read-only memory.

17. (Currently Amended) The plug-in module of claim 15 wherein the plug-in module comprises
~~an~~ a Small Form factor Pluggable (SFP)-plug-in module.